Female foeticide

52. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the female foeticide is on the rise in some of the relatively developed States in India;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore;

(c) whether the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, has not had the desired impact in this regard; and

(d) the action plan for curbing the female foeticide in India?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) and (b) The Provisional figures of Census 2001 indicate drastic fall in the sex ratio of 0-6 age group in almost all the States/UTs and more steeply in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh and Delhi. Several reasons are adduced to explain the same. Some of the important reasons commonly put forward are:-

- Neglect of the girl child resulting in their higher mortality at younger ages;
- High maternal mortality;
- Female infanticide;
- Male bias in enumeration of population;
- Female foeticide;

(c) and (d) During the last decade social activists, voluntary organisations and non-governmental organisations working all over the country have been expressing their apprehensions that people are resorting to female foeticide. With a view to check it, the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 came into operation since 1st January, 1996. The Act bans disclosure of sex of foetus. It is applicable to all States and UTs except J&K. Though certain reports of violation of the provisions of the Act were received

from certain States/UTs like Tamilnadu, Haryana and Delhi, no one has so far been punished for want of evidence.

The responsibility for implementation of the Act rests largely with the States/UTs. The States/UTs have been advised to mount an effective awareness campaign to make the public and service providers aware of the provisions of the Act. The States/UTs have also been advised to provide protection to social activists and Non-Governmental organizations giving information or filing complaints of violation of provisions of the Act. Supreme Court in PIL, has issued certain directions on 4th May, 2001 to all concerned, including the Central Government, State Governments and Appropriate Authorities to take steps for effective implementation of the Act.

Workshops/Seminars are being organised at State/district level, to create awareness about the provisions of the Act. Leading Non Governmental Organisations have been requested to take on projects about generating awareness about the provisions of the Act, among doctors/clinics/law inforcing authorities and public at large.

Prevention of female foeticide

53. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to associate religious leaders for prevention of female foeticide creating imbalances in sex ratio in certain States like Haryana, Punjab etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, how the balance will be maintained?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) to (c) Indian Medical Association in collaboration with UNICEF and National Commission for Women convened a Religious leaders' meet against female foeticide/ infanticide on 24th June 2001 at New Delhi. The Meet was attended by many religious leaders, government functionaries, doctors, social activists, representatives from media, NGO, educationists and legal experts. One aim of this meet was to seek a consensus amongst